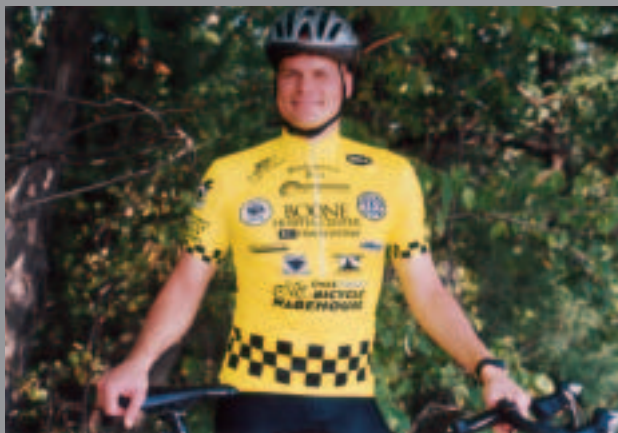


People *in motion*



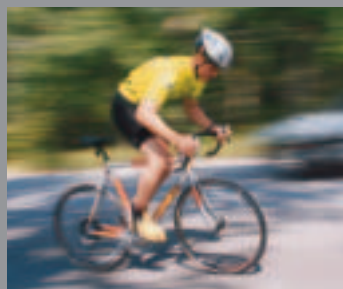
By Sue Cox
Photography by Cathy Morrison

Tom Brinker

Brinker actively participates in the Columbia Bicycle Club, Columbia Multi-sport Club, Missouri Bicycle Federation, Show-Me State Games, United States Cycling Federation, and PedNet, a local cycling and pedestrian coalition in Columbia, where he serves as a board member.

The Issues: First, safety. “We can never stop trying to make transportation safer for all means of travel, including bicycling,” Brinker says. “There’s lots of work to do.” For example, he cites water grates with bars that run parallel to the street; bars perpendicular to the street would be safer for bicyclists.

Second, access. “If cycling is going to continue to grow as a viable form of transportation, access cannot be diminished by



a lack of planning,” Brinker says. Cyclists also need access to decision-makers and lawmakers to explain cyclists’ needs and how to produce them within a budget, Brinker says.

Third, education. “The focus should be on educating people about safety rules and enforcing existing laws, rather than creating new legislation,” he believes.

“People on bikes must obey the rules and the laws, the same way motorists do,” Brinker says.

What’s Ahead: Brinker says more people are recognizing the benefits of cycling for themselves and their communities. He believes MoDOT is interested in the cycling community and works closely with others to improve this form of transportation. “It takes a lot of teamwork,” Brinker says.

The Finish Line: Brinker only races locally now, but still is committed to riding a bike as often as he can. “It’s a kind of freedom,” he says. “And, it’s fun!” ■

Sue Cox is special projects coordinator in Transportation Planning at MoDOT General Headquarters.

Location: Columbia, Mo.

Background: He’s a retailer by trade and a cyclist at heart. A love for riding, for freedom and for a livelihood built on a passion – this is Tom Brinker.

At age 12, Brinker first hung around in, then went to work for a bicycle shop. In 1984, at age 14, he competed in his first national championship, but crashed and mangled his bike. Bruised and bleeding, he crossed the finish line on a borrowed bike to the cheers of the crowd. The moment changed his life.

A representative from the United States Cycling Federation offered Brinker a chance to attend a cycling camp, which later led him to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo. He met the greats – Lance Armstrong, Bobby Julich, Marty Nothstein, Aaron Hartwell – while winning three national championships and training for the 1988 Olympics.

However, instead of the Olympics, Brinker and a friend qualified in the tandem match sprints in 1992 when they finished fifth at the world championships in Belgium. When his friend was injured, Brinker, age 22, changed course again.

The Job: Since 1993, Brinker has owned a bicycling business in downtown Columbia, so everyday he gets to do what he loves most – ride a bicycle.

Favorite Part of the Job: “I like to help people have a good bicycling experience,” he says. Part of that goal is insuring a proper fit of the rider and the bike.

His Cause: Brinker also enjoys promoting bicycling as a viable form of transportation.

“It’s not just a sport,” he notes. “It’s recreation, and it’s transportation. A cyclist can cover lots of ground in an inexpensive way.”